

# Beowulf

## V

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**STONE-BRIGHT** the street: [footnote 1] it showed the way  
to the crowd of clansmen. Corselets glistened  
hand-forged, hard; on their harness bright  
the steel ring sang, as they strode along  
in mail of battle, and marched to the hall.  
There, weary of ocean, the wall along  
they set their bucklers, their broad shields, down,  
and bowed them to bench: the breastplates clanged,  
war-gear of men; their weapons stacked,  
spears of the seafarers stood together,  
gray-tipped ash: that iron band  
was worthily weaponed! -- A warrior proud  
asked of the heroes their home and kin.  
"Whence, now, bear ye burnished shields,  
harness gray and helmets grim,  
spears in multitude? Messenger, I,  
Hrothgar's herald! Heroes so many  
ne'er met I as strangers of mood so strong.  
'Tis plain that for prowess, not plunged into exile,  
for high-hearted valor, Hrothgar ye seek!"  
Him the sturdy-in-war bespake with words,  
proud earl of the Weders answer made,  
hardy 'neath helmet:--"Hygelac's, we,  
fellows at board; I am Beowulf named.  
I am seeking to say to the son of Healfdene  
this mission of mine, to thy master-lord,  
the doughty prince, if he deign at all  
grace that we greet him, the good one, now."  
Wulfgar spake, the Wendles' chieftain,  
whose might of mind to many was known,  
his courage and counsel: "The king of Danes,  
the Scyldings' friend, I fain will tell,  
the Breaker-of-Rings, as the boon thou askest,  
the famed prince, of thy faring hither,  
and, swiftly after, such answer bring  
as the doughty monarch may deign to give."  
Hied then in haste to where Hrothgar sat  
white-haired and old, his earls about him,  
till the stout thane stood at the shoulder there  
of the Danish king: good courtier he!  
Wulfgar spake to his winsome lord:--  
"Hither have fared to thee far-come men  
o'er the paths of ocean, people of Geatland;

and the stateliest there by his sturdy band  
is Beowulf named. This boon they seek,  
that they, my master, may with thee  
have speech at will: nor spurn their prayer  
to give them hearing, gracious Hrothgar!  
In weeds of the warrior worthy they,  
methinks, of our liking; their leader most surely,  
a hero that hither his henchmen has led."

**Footnotes.**

**1.**

Either merely paved, the strata via of the Romans, or else thought of as a sort of mosaic, an extravagant touch like the reckless waste of gold on the walls and roofs of a hall.